

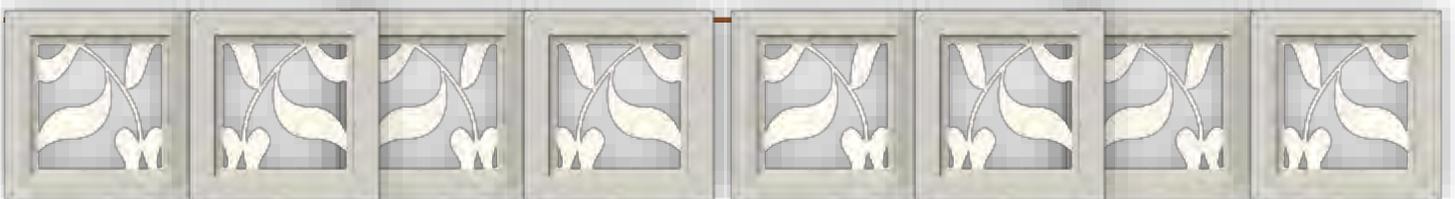
# IN THE NEWS

*January 2020*

Parks & Recreation Programs  
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center  
Gainesville Civic Center  
Lake Lanier Olympic Center  
City / County Issues  
Miscellaneous



Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency  
830 Green Street  
Gainesville, GA 30501



## New Year New You Expo

**When:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 8

**Where:** Gainesville Civic Center, 830 Green St. NE, Gainesville

**More info:** 770-535-6330, [lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com)

**How much:** Free



**SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Personal trainers Chris Foeste and Tommie Griffith, left, lead vendors in warm up stretches Friday, Jan. 18, 2019, at the New Year, New You expo at Gainesville Civic Center.

1-2-20

Diletto Bakery opened in late 2019.

BY NICK BOWMAN  
nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

More people, and money, flowing into Hall County at the end of a record economic year for the state mean one thing in 2020: There will be plenty of exciting places to spend some cash in the new year.

While a hefty number of restaurants are catching attention, not all of the spots to watch in 2020 are resolution-busters. Here are a few things we're keeping an eye on this year:

### Midtown Gainesville

Midtown was in the news a good bit in 2019, and for good reason: Gainesville is angling to finally close the deal on a revitalization of the area that has been in the works, or at least in the hopes, for years.

In 2019, a real-deal developer signed on to build a multi-use project on the other side of the midtown bridge. Construction of more than 200 apartments and 10,000 square feet of retail space could start as early as May and take up to two years.

But things are already happening in midtown. In December, Diletto Bakery opened on Bradford Street also near the midtown bridge. The bakery spent years building a fanbase by plugging away at the Gainesville Farmers Market on Fridays.

While Diletto is in midtown, the business offering on South American flavors is finding itself well placed to fill the space left by Midland Coffee Co.'s exit from downtown in 2019.

And then there's the skate park and new pond coming to the Midtown Greenway deeper into midtown. Not far from the park, Let There Be Rock School got rolling on Main Street, and has stayed rolling, in 2019.

Midtown has also been the new, trendy home for home decor shops and one of Gainesville's most interesting new restaurants: The Inked Pig.

### That gravel lot downtown

If you thought you read a lot about midtown in 2019, how about the fourth side of the square in downtown Gainesville?

With retired Coca Cola Co. CEO Doug Ivester buying into the project after developer Tim Knight's plans collapsed in 2019, this could be the year work begins on something, anything, in Gainesville's favorite parking lot at the corner of Main and Spring streets.

Ivester's plans would bring some architectural touches from Gainesville's Brenau University, where Ivester is a trustee and donor, to the square. His partners designing the project are aiming for ground-floor retail but fewer upper-story residences than Knight.

Look for work — or at least word — on that project in 2020.

### South Hall

Flowery Branch has been building more cottages than cafes, but the South Hall community and its neighbor, Braselton, are attracting a lot of attention from Gwinnett and points deeper into metro Atlanta.

Main Street Flowery Branch is on track for a redesign, as another multi-use project is slated for downtown — and Flowery Branch is serious about it, having already demolished a good chunk of downtown to make way for it.

The Residential Group is aiming to build



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Chateau Elan's lush grape vineyard surrounds the winery Thursday, June 20, 2019.

about 8,000 square feet of ground-floor retail with 15 apartments above on Main Street in the city. It's also aiming for an apartment project elsewhere in Flowery Branch.

That's not to mention the hundreds of units of apartments, townhomes and homes that have wound their way to approval at Flowery Branch, Braselton and the South Hall-ish Oakwood. These communities are likely to see more retailers coming closer to home in 2020 and beyond.

Oh, and don't forget about Chateau Elan this year, which was sold in 2019 after the death of founder Don Panoz and just concluded a \$20 million renovation.

### Georgia wineries

Georgia winemakers have banded together to put more effort, and money, behind the statewide Georgia Wine Producers group.

That might sound a little boring, but the consequences won't be: Georgia and neighboring states are going to hear more about wineries not far from Hall County in 2020.

With a new executive director at the helm, Georgia Wine Producers is thinking up a new marketing push representing winemakers in the Peach State.

State winemakers are set to gather in early February at Chateau Elan. The annual conference includes a Feb. 4 wine tasting that's open to the public, so long as the public has \$30.

Expect to hear more about Georgia wine in 2020.

### What are we missing?

Are you looking forward to anything fun in 2020 that you don't see on this list? Write to us at [life@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:life@gainesvilletimes.com) and let us know about it.

Nick Bowman is feature editor at The Times.

1-2-20

# Community gathers to discuss bullying in city schools



NICK WATSON | The Times

Gainesville City Schools Superintendent Jeremy Williams, left, speaks Monday night at a "Parents Rebuilding the Village" meeting held at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center in Gainesville. The group rose out of the arrest of a Gainesville Middle School student's mother, who was charged with terroristic threats after a video in which she complained about her son being bullied.

BY NICK WATSON

nwatson@gainesvilletimes.com

A Gainesville Middle School student's mother became "a sacrifice" in order to spur the community's passion to combat bullying and address issues in the school system, Apostle Roderick Hughey said Monday night at a community meeting.

Dozens of people gathered at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center for a panel discussion hosted by "Parents Rebuilding the Village." The group formed after the arrest two weeks ago of Cirea Oliver, who was charged with terroristic threats following a video posted on Facebook.

In the video, posted around 12:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, the woman

discusses her child being bullied and feeling that not enough is being done by the faculty to address the issue.

"Sadly, it took her getting ugly in order to get our attention as a whole. Did I say it was right the way she — well I don't know how you would handle it if you lose it. Before you judge, be real with yourself. We've all lost it at some point," Hughey said.

The panel included Gainesville City Schools Superintendent Jeremy Williams, leaders in the faith community, "Parents Rebuilding the Village" members and Georgia Legal Services Program staff attorney Alina Venick.

Gainesville Police Cpl. Jessica Van said comments in the video were "insinuating that she was

going to shoot multiple people at the school." In the video, which was obtained by The Times, Oliver discusses showing up to the school at the end of the school day to pick up her child.

She explains that she has voiced her concerns to teachers and the principal "numerous times."

"I'm going to go up to the school and talk to them again, and I'm going to talk to the Board of Education and talk to whoever I need to up there because something has to be done," Oliver said in the video. "It's breaking my heart because it's like nothing I can do."

Oliver, who is a single parent, said in the video that she works hard to give her child a strong support system. She said the consistent

■ Please see PARENTS, 5A

1-2-20

# PARENTS

■ Continued from 1A

bullying falls back on the school and other people's parenting.

"It feels like his world is crashing, and he feels inadequate and he feels like he's nothing," Oliver said in the video. "It defeats the purpose because I instill at home that he is somebody. That I love him. That he's smart and intelligent."

Williams kicked off the presentation following a prayer and a couple of questions from the community, expounding on the four Rs in the school system: ready, respectful, responsible, role model.

"When you look at those four things, that's the proactive approach that we take. These are the conversations that are happening in the classroom. These are the conversations that are happening with the counselors on the front end to try and be proactive about things," Williams said.

Williams said there is a three-strikes policy relating to bullying before a student is moved to an alternative school, though an offense considered especially severe may lead to this punishment before a third strike.

"When you start to look at what a classroom looks like now compared to what a classroom looked like when most of us went to school, it's very different. The demands on the teacher today are

much more, I would argue, than it has ever been in public school history," Williams said.

Venick discussed the rights that parents should know if their children ever find themselves in trouble.

If pulled into an administrative office, the student has the right to remain silent until a parent arrives, Venick said, and if the child says anything or writes a statement for an administrator, then it could be used in a potential tribunal.

Georgia Legal Services Program can represent students in discipline cases.

"It is important that we (are) keeping our kids in school. Once they start getting out of school, it's the school-to-prison pipeline. They get out of school, and it just becomes harder and harder on them. This is more likely to affect students of color and students

with special needs," Venick said.

The rallying cry of the "Parents Rebuilding the Village" has been, "I am one brick and I will help to rebuild this village."

St. John Baptist Church pastor Stephen P. Samuel asked: "What tore the village down?"

Samuel said we live in communities now where we don't know our neighbors nor the other students our children interact with at school.

"Every one of those children, we have to see them as a part of our family, our village. That has to be a value that is instilled in us. I'll say this, and I'm unashamed to say this: Character is not built at school. My child's teacher is not the first person responsible for building character in my child," Samuel said.

In "rebuilding the vil-

lage," Samuel said a community can set forth values as parents and a "platform where we then are proclaiming and lifting up and teaching what those values truly are."

That could be seen in parents mentoring parents or a venue for intervention.

Kelly Williams of "Parents Rebuilding the Village" posited a theory that performance in the schools may lead to bullying by pointing to the College and Career

Ready Performance Index.

The CCRPI scores are calculated on a 100-point scale and based on five main components — content mastery, progress, closing gaps, readiness and, for high schools, graduation rate.

The CCRPI score for Gainesville Middle School was 61.7.

Gainesville's overall CCRPI score came out at 69.2, increasing 7.7 points from last year. The elementary schools received a 70.4,

middle school got a 61.7 and high school earned a 73.2.

"It is my theory that with the widespread failure comes embarrassment as well as frustration," Williams said.

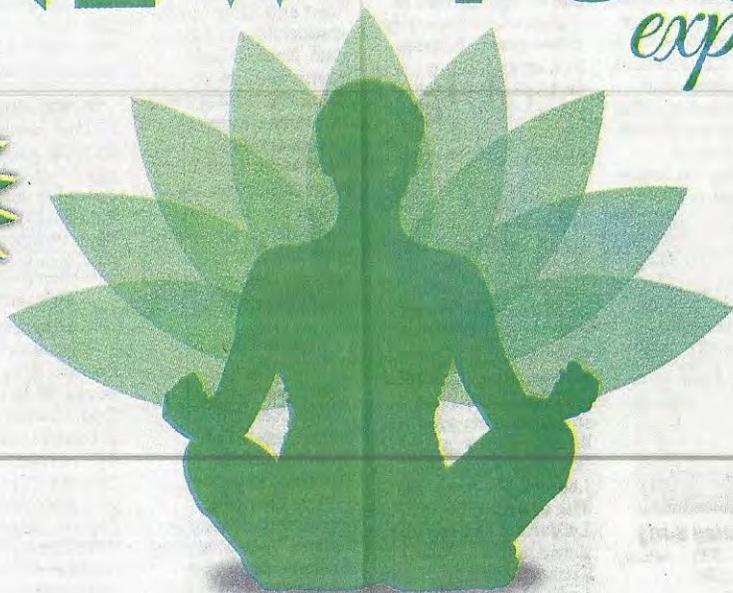
In offering solutions, Imam Bilal Ali of the Gainesville Islamic Cultural Center advocated that members of the community come to serve as mentors with some of the school's "most troubled youth."

1-2-20

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*new year*  
**NEW YOU**  
*expo*

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**January 8, 2020**

**Gainesville Civic Center**

**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

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1-8-20

# new year NEW YOU

expo

**JANUARY 8**  
**10 AM - 1 PM**

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Northeast Georgia Health System

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## **SCHEDULE**

**10:15** Tai Chi Demonstration

**10:45** Stretching *by Limestone Personal Fitness*

**11:00** Prize Giveaway

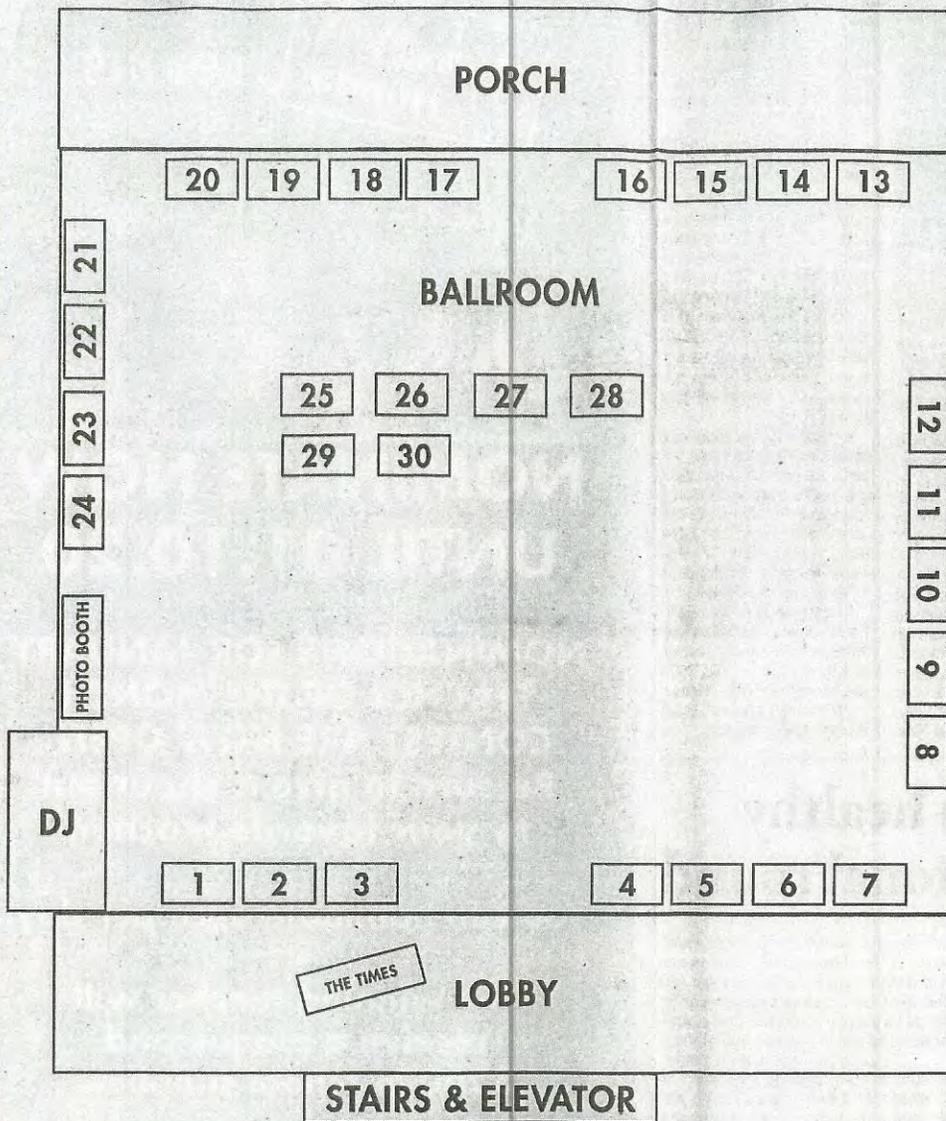
**11:45** Stretching *by Limestone Personal Fitness*

**12:00** Prize Giveaway

**12:45** Stretching

**1:00 PM** Prize Giveaway

11520



- 1-14. Northeast Georgia Hospital System
- 15. A Helping Hand Home Care
- 16. The Insurance Source
- 17. Allergy Asthma Sinus Center
- 18. The Joint
- 19. Northeast Georgia Diagnostic
- 20. Bemer
- 21-22. Center for Advanced Research
- 23-24. Spa on Green Street
- 25. Humane Society
- 26. Charlotte Hill Nutrition
- 27. Watkins Total Health
- 28. Wellness Loft
- 29 Your CBD Store
- 30. Limestone Personal Training
- Times Photo Booth
- DJ JB Jams

GAINESVILLE CIVIC CENTER 830 GREEN ST NE , GAINESVILLE, GA 30501

Booth locations are Subject to Change. 1-5-20

# LOTS OF FUN AND PRIZES!

For more information, contact Dana Erwin at 770- 535- 6380, or [derwin@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:derwin@gainesvilletimes.com)

**The Times**  
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# \$44M SPLOST projects still in works

## Plans remain from SPLOST VII, which ends collections this summer

BY JEFF GILL

[jgill@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:jgill@gainesvilletimes.com)

Cash or Credit? For those traveling Cash Road to reach Hog Mountain Road in South Hall, it's more than a financial decision — it's a navigational one.

In what may be humorous for those unfamiliar to the area, motorists can stay on Cash or turn right on Credit Drive to reach Hog Mountain, a key traffic artery in Flowery Branch.

But that won't be a decision for much longer, as Hall County is planning to straighten Cash Road and make it the only option for motorists traveling to Hog Mountain.

The \$2.35 million road improvement is one of Hall County's remain-

ing special purpose local option sales tax projects before SPLOST VIII, approved by voters in November, kicks in July 1.

The county still has about \$33.5 million in unfinished projects from SPLOST VII, ranging from road work to fire stations and park renovations. The projects are either underway or in various planning stages.

SPLOST, which became a taxing method for governments through a state law passed in 1985, is a 1% sales tax, or a penny on the dollar, with proceeds divided between the county and its cities. The money can only be used for capital projects, not for funding operations.

SPLOST VII was approved by voters in March 2015, and collections started that summer. It was pro-

jected to generate \$158 million. As of Nov. 30, \$141.6 million had been collected; collections continue until June 30.

"It is common for SPLOST projects to continue for a period of time after proceeds are no longer being collected," said Katie Crumley, Hall County spokeswoman. "However, county staff works diligently to complete all projects in a timely manner."

As for the Hog Mountain/Cash Road project, an engineering consultant is developing final plans, including the timeline, potential right of way acquisition and final total cost estimate, Crumley said in a recent email.

"The engineers are in the process

■ Please see **SPLOST, 4A**



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Hall County is preparing to make changes at the longtime Y intersection of Credit Drive and Cash and Hog Mountain roads in South Hall. It's a project remaining from SPLOST VII, a sales tax approved in 2015 that has funded numerous capital projects.

1-524

# SPLOST

■ Continued from 1A

of surveying the property and preparing drawings for a mid-January meeting (on the project)," she said. "The (right of way) acquisition can begin shortly thereafter."

The project, which calls for Credit Drive to end in a cul-de-sac, came up during a discussion in 2019 about a proposed 334-unit apartment complex at 4496 Hog Mountain Road, next to Flowery Branch High School and across from Cash Road.

Area residents said they were concerned about traffic generated by the project mixing with the already high volume of cars.

But developers, who got approval from Flowery Branch City Council for the project on Sept. 20, said they expected a mixture of traffic improvements in the area to help ease the crunch. In addition to Cash Road, future improvements include Exit 14 opening, Spout Springs Road widening and Interstate 985 widening.

The lion's share of the \$33.5 million in SPLOST projects is related to the long-awaited Sardis Road Connector in northwest Hall. Some \$17.5 million from SPLOST VII will be combined with \$10 million from SPLOST VIII to pay for right of way acquisition, utility relocation and other work.

The Hall County Board of Commissioners voted in November to begin the right of way acquisition process for the project.

The route would run from the Dawsonville Highway/Ga. 53 area in West Hall to Thompson Bridge Road/Ga. 60 in North Hall. Right of way acquisition would affect a total of 143 parcels, including 32 homes and six businesses.

Right of way acquisition is expected to take about two years, and construction on the project could begin

## Remaining SPLOST projects

These key projects are finishing up or yet to start before Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax VIII kicks in on July 1:

### Hall County

**Cash Road Improvements at Hog Mountain Road: \$2.35 million**

**Sardis Road Connector right of way acquisition and utility relocation: \$17.5 million**

**New Fire Station 17 in South Hall and equipment: \$5.7 million**

**Fire Station 1 relocation: \$2.5 million**

**Main Library renovations: \$2 million**

**Road resurfacing: \$2 million**

**Murrayville Park renovations: \$1.4 million**

### Gainesville

**Gainesville Fire Station No. 2 relocation: \$4 million**

**J. Melvin Cooper Youth Athletic Complex: \$6.8 million**

Source: Hall County, Gainesville



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Hall County is preparing to make changes at the longtime Y intersection of Credit Drive and Cash and Hog Mountain roads in South Hall.

in fiscal year 2024, county spokesman Brian Stewart told The Times in November.

One very noticeable SPLOST VII project is renovations at the Main Street branch of the Hall County Library System in Gainesville. The branch closed in March 2019 for the work, which is expected to be finished

in July or August, officials have said.

Gainesville also has \$10.8 million in unfinished projects from SPLOST VII: \$4 million for the Gainesville Fire Station No. 2 relocation and \$6.8 million for the J. Melvin Cooper Youth Athletic Complex. The city also has a mix of public works projects, such as repaving.

"All projects are underway and projected for completion," Gainesville spokeswoman Christina Santee said.

Construction could begin in late 2020 on the J. Melvin Cooper complex on Old Cornelia Highway. The fire station relocation is scheduled for completion by June 30.

The county's smaller cities also are spending remaining SPLOST money for road resurfacing and infrastructure efforts. Flowery Branch has \$184,371 designated for police vehicles and \$43,250 for a citywide sign project, city officials said.

SPLOST VIII is projected to bring in about \$217 million between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2026, officials have said.

The county and cities have released a list of their projects, which include improvements for roads, parks, public safety, trails and greenspace.

1-5-20

# Local expo goes beyond tips for healthy living

BY KELSEY PODO

kpod@times.com

Many people who came to the New Year New You expo on Wednesday, Jan. 8, took away more than a couple of tips for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

"I recently had balance issues," 76-year-old Carl Liggett said after he completed a screening. "I realized that I'm not as bad off as I thought I was."

The Gainesville Civic Center was packed on Wednesday with 31 different vendors, including a range of services from the Northeast Georgia Medical Center, local dietitians, personal fitness trainers and health-related businesses.

The event, which was sponsored by The Times and the Northeast Georgia Health System, offered attendees the opportunity to participate in a 6-week healthy lifestyle challenge for a chance to win \$1,000.

Whether participants joined the challenge or not, they still left with a stronger sense of the health options in Hall County.

"I like the expo," Carolyn Miller said while

■ Please see EXPO, 7A

1-9-20



Photos by SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Brenda Sue Whitmire leads a Tai Chi demonstration Wednesday, Jan. 8, at the New Year New You expo at the Gainesville Civic Center.

## EXPO

■ Continued from 1A

perusing the vendor booths. "You get so much information on different things and you can follow up on it."

Linda Miller of Gainesville said she attended the event to take advantage of the free screenings, including the allergy test.

A physician from The Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center gave mini consultations, checking for reactions to the most common allergens: cats, dust mites, dogs, grass, ragweed and trees.

People had their arms quickly pricked and waited for 15 minutes to see if they had a small allergic response.

"This breaks down the barrier of people thinking that it's scary and painful to go to an allergist," Meredith Pippin, who works at the allergy center, said. "A lot of people that were tested before, especially in this age range (60-80 years old), it was this brutal process. Now it's toothpick scratches. It's simple."

Charlotte Hill, a registered dietitian, helped change attendees' perspectives on eating healthy. At her Gainesville business — Charlotte Hill Nutrition Counseling — Hill develops diet plans specific to each client's needs.

She said some of the biggest excuses people have for not maintaining a healthy diet includes the temptation of cravings, convenience of fast-food and not having the time to prepare food for



Registered dietitian Giselle Cram takes questions at the Bariatrics Weight Loss Center at NGMC booth.

the week.

"I feel like a lot of people say they know how to eat healthy, but they choose not to," Hill said. "I'm just trying to reduce the barriers and what's blocking them from eating healthy."

Cecily Sharp, owner of Your CBD Store Gainesville, showed the expo's attendees a different means of improving their health.

She sells CBD, also called cannabidiol, in different forms like gummies, pain cream, tinctures and water soluble solutions. Not to be confused with THC, the main psychoactive compound in marijuana, CBD is a cannabis compound derived from hemp.

CBD can be used to ease arthritis, anxiety, chronic pain and other health-related issues.

"I just want people to know the benefits of CBD," Sharp said. "There's still so many people that don't know about it and we're still trying to educate people."

Across the room, therapists and coordinators from

Northeast Georgia Medical Center's physical therapy department and trauma services conducted fall screenings. The tests entailed asking participants to balance their weight in different positions.

Elaina Lee, the trauma department's safe kids coordinator, said falling is one of the most common injuries seen at the trauma center, next to motor vehicle crashes.

She encourages senior citizens or those who have balance issues to get screened.

"It's very necessary," Lee said. "With it being one of the top criteria of what we see in the trauma program, it's vital for them to be screened."

Lois Ehlers, a 65-year-old Gainesville resident, said she greatly benefited from coming to the expo and undergoing a fall screening. She now plans to sit up and down 10 times a day to improve her balance.

"I just got a good tip on how to keep me from going to a nursing home, so I thought that was insightful" Ehlers said.

1-9-20

# FOOD FIGHT: Food truck owners, Forsyth County Health Department clash over permits

BY ALEXANDER POPP  
Forsyth County News

When Joe Garcia, co-founder of NoFo Brew Co., opened a brewery in north Forsyth County with two friends in 2019, they had a vision of creating a local space where people could come to enjoy a nice beer, food and fun with friends and family, in a laid-back inclusive environment.

But part of that vision has run into some slight hiccups over the last year, according to Garcia, when the unstoppable force of the passionate new business ran into an immovable object — health department permitting for food trucks.

From the beginning, Garcia says that NoFo Brew Co. ran into problems carrying out their idea to bring a rotating selection of food trucks to the brewery on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

According to Garcia, problems arose when food trucks attempted to obtain a mobile food service permit from the Forsyth County Health Department.

Truck owners and the brewery said Forsyth County's enforcement of state requirements to get a permit are stricter than other counties in Metro Atlanta.

Many of the trucks having difficulty already have permits in surrounding counties like Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett and have been operating in those locations for years.

Garcia said Forsyth County's health department requires businesses to provide items like notarized letters, "schematic drawings" and business plans.

The health department also required NoFo Brew Co. to provide two-week's notice of what food trucks would operate at the brewery, Garcia said.

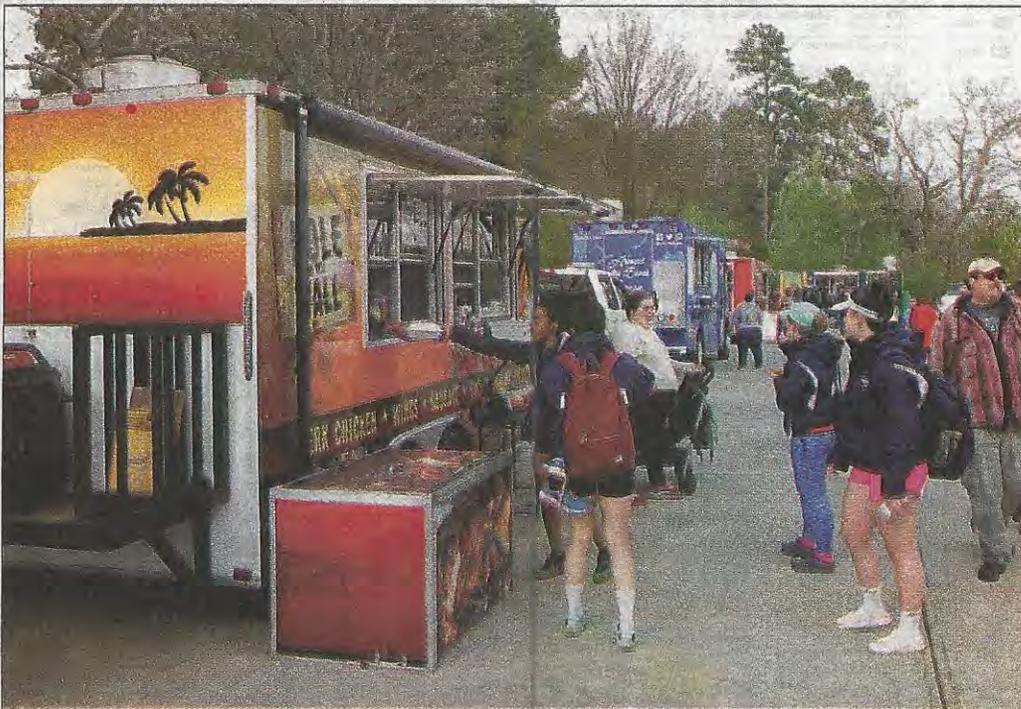
"These are blue collar guys — the same guy that owns the truck is the guy cooking the barbecue — and these guys have to get an annual permit in every single county that they work in, separate permits, separate inspections by the health department; there's no reciprocity there," Garcia said. "They are getting put through the wringer, not to mention the laundry list of stuff that the health department has put back onto us as the business that's just ridiculous."

In a conversation with the Forsyth County News on Thursday, Forsyth County Health Department spokeswoman Erin Stitt rebutted claims that food trucks are being judged any differently in the local community than in other counties.

According to Stitt, the Forsyth County Health Department "enforces the Georgia Department of Public Health Rules and Regulations" which are consistent throughout the state.

But even though the state's requirements for food-related permits are uniform, local health departments do have some leeway during the permitting process to account for variables that may arise, Stitt said.

"We may require something more in-depth based on their concept, menu, the distance that they're driving, that type of thing," she said. "Because you may



Times file photo

People place orders at food trucks during Food Truck Fridays at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Friday, March 15. Food trucks have hit a snag at a popular new brewery in northern Forsyth County, where brewery owners say their plans to host food trucks on a regular basis have been slowed down by health regulations.



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Gonzo Gourmet's Kim Coley helps Stephanie Savage with her food purchase Friday, Aug. 2, 2019, at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

have your base of operation in one county and operating as a food truck in that county, but once you leave that county, if you're going 50 miles ... is your generator going to operate that long? Are you going to have the same menu?"

Two local food truck owners spoke with the FCN under the condition of anonymity, fearing that being named could impact the outcome of their next health score. Both said the process to get a permit to operate a food truck in Forsyth County hasn't been as simple as following the rules and has varied widely from their experiences in other areas.

One food truck owner that moved their business to Forsyth County from the metro Atlanta area said that after operating for many years in the Atlanta area, they didn't consider the possibility that they would run into

problems in Forsyth County, which is widely known for its pro-business views.

"I had permits in Cobb County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, so we didn't really think about it and when we started looking for a location in Forsyth County and started dealing with the health department it was a big deal," the owner said. "Of all those counties, Forsyth County is the worst."

The problem that both owners ran into was a requirement for the business's "base of operations" to have an enclosed space, like a garage or warehouse, where the food truck can be pulled into while food is loaded onto the truck.

Both food truck owners said that this requirement alone was enough to halt their plans of "open vending," or selling directly to customers in Forsyth County.

"We had to change a lot of our operation because of Forsyth County," one business owner said. "We lost a lot of business from not being able to do that."

"That takes a lot of money and we have to see the outcome of the food truck investment," another business owner said. "So right now, we really haven't taken a decision. Everything has just been paused."

Both say they pivoted to using their food trucks for catering while they figure out whether something can change and what's next for their business.

Following a meeting between Garcia, representatives of the Forsyth County government and members of the local health department which was held last week, Forsyth County District 4 Commissioner Cindy Jones Mills commented that she is at a loss for how a food

truck permitted in other counties could fall short in Forsyth County.

"That just didn't make sense to me," Mills said.

While Mills said the county is pro-food truck and in favor of helping the businesses get what they need, she said that the issue is out of their hands and suggested that it could be an issue that needs to be taken up with state legislators.

In response to the individual business's problems, Stitt said that without seeing the business's permits or other documents from other counties, she couldn't comment on a specific case, but pointed out that all the requirements are listed in black and white.

Stitt also explained that because health departments are separate entities, with specific jurisdictions, permitting is required in both the county where the food

truck's base of operations is located and each county where the mobile unit operates. And for good reason, she said.

"I don't know what you were permitted for in Cherokee County. That's why the state is requiring a permit for every county," she said. "I didn't review what happened there ... I only have jurisdiction over what happens in my county."

At the end of the day, Garcia's vision for bringing multiple food trucks into the county on a regular basis isn't unreasonable, Stitt said. In fact, it's something that the health department is used to in different areas of Georgia.

The catch is that all the state's rules and procedures have to be carried out in the process of executing that vision.

"It happens in several other locations and different counties," she said. "You just have to go through the permitting process."

On Wednesday, Garcia said that even though they haven't gotten a 100% positive resolution to the problem, the meeting held last week gave them hope that their vision will pan out eventually.

According to Garcia, during that meeting a county planning and zoning employee stepped up to help the first handful of food trucks negotiate the permitting process with the health department. Already they expect to have a barbecue food truck at the brewery in the near future.

"I'm very optimistic that we'll get a dozen food trucks that are permitted and licensed in Forsyth County, that can operate, not just at our brewery, but also other locations in Forsyth County," he said. "I might be the first business that plans to use food trucks on a regular basis, but I'm definitely not going to be the last."

# City lays out 10-year plan for parks

Proposal includes covered stage, playground, splash pad along Midtown Greenway

BY MEGAN REED

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Gainesville could get an outdoor pool, more splash pads, a dog park, more trails and some upgrades to existing parks.

A new master plan for Gainesville Parks and Recreation lays out some ideas for the next 10 years based on community input and an inventory of current facilities.

The study includes results of a survey taken by about 1,500 people, input from a public meeting, and interviews with city officials and community members.

Gainesville Parks and Recreation worked with the Norcross-based Foresite Group on the study, which took about a year.

The top request among survey takers lines up with a national trend. The highest amount of survey takers, at 65%, said they want to see more hiking and walking trails, and 51% requested biking multi-use trails. The fourth most popular item was greenways, with 40% of survey takers asking for those.

The study uses National Recreation and Park Association standards as a guideline and considers population growth in the city. Planners recommend that the city add 20 miles of natural trails, 20 miles of greenway paths and eight miles of mountain bike trails.

“Nationally, that’s the No. 1 thing — trail connectivity, and people want to be able to walk to

a park, and walk to businesses, walk to restaurants,” Parks Director Kate Mattison said.

The master plan includes a covered stage, playground and a splash pad along the Midtown Greenway. Engine 209, the historic train currently the center of a city park off Jesse Jewell Parkway, could also be relocated along the greenway.

The city is already building a skate park along the Midtown Greenway, too. That is scheduled to be ready this spring.

Another goal is to make it easier for people to walk or bike to a park. About 30% of city residents live within a half mile of a park or greenspace, which is considered a walkable distance. Every city

■ Please see **PARKS, 4A**



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Improvements at Green Street Park, the former site of Green Street Pool, are part of the Gainesville Parks and Recreation department’s recently finished master plan, which will guide the department over the next decade.

1-19-20

# PARKS

■ Continued from 1A

residence is within three miles of a park, which is the standard for biking.

"There is a need to connect parks and greenspace to the community through a comprehensive system of sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, bike paths, greenways, and natural trails," according to the report.

The plan also calls for some additional space for sports, including six multi-purpose fields. The Gainesville City Council has already voted to acquire 89 acres off

Old Cornelia Highway for a youth sports complex, which will have fields for baseball, softball, football, soccer and lacrosse, along with playgrounds, a pavilion and trails. An additional sports complex could also be needed, according to the study.

Other plans include some improvements at Green Street Park, such as a small splash pad and space for food trucks to park during events. Longwood Park could get an updated pavilion and walking path and a 50,000-square-foot festival space that could hold events, such as the city's annual Spring Chicken Festival that relocated to the park last year.

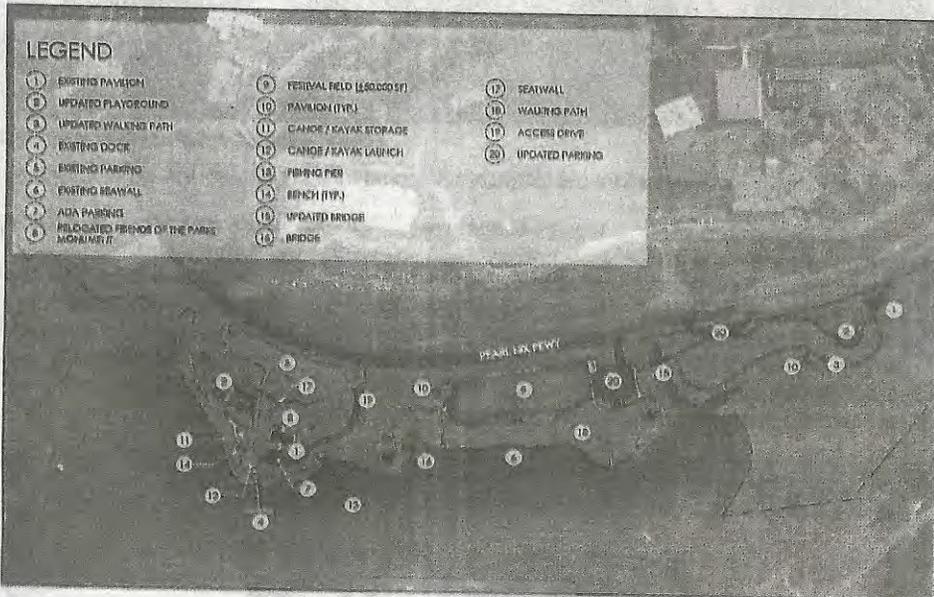
The plan highlights goals for the next five years and the next 10 years. By 2025, the city hopes to design and build a sports complex in northeast or south Gainesville, improve trail connectivity, renovate Green Street Park and build a dog park, though a location for that has not been determined. By 2030, the city hopes to improve access to Lake Lanier, focus on community gathering spaces and events, and plan for a new recreation center in south or northeast Gainesville. Indoor gym space is especially needed, Mattison said.

The full report is available on the city website.

'Nationally, that's the No. 1 thing — trail connectivity, and people want to be able to walk to a park, and walk to businesses, walk to restaurants.' **Kate Mattison**, parks director

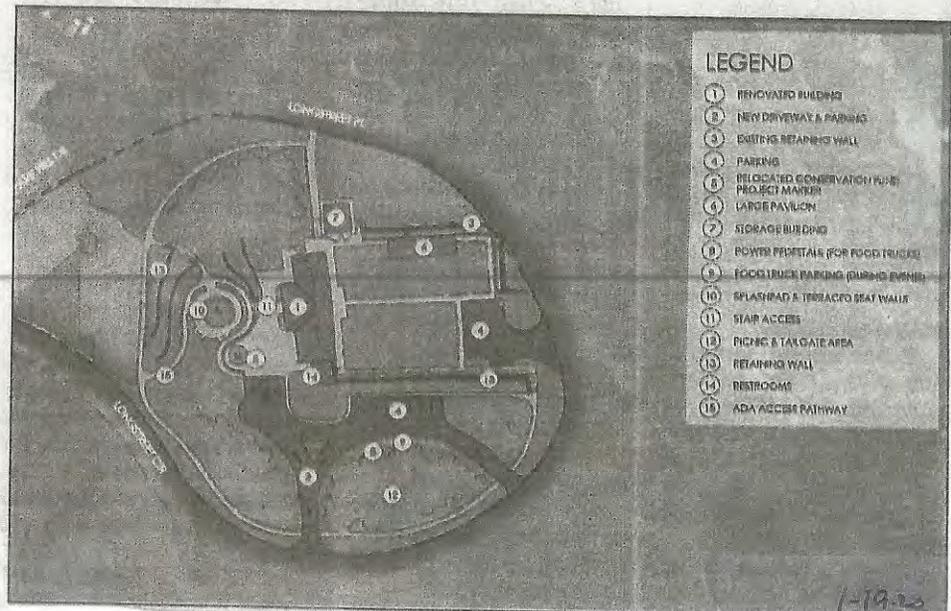


## LONGWOOD PARK

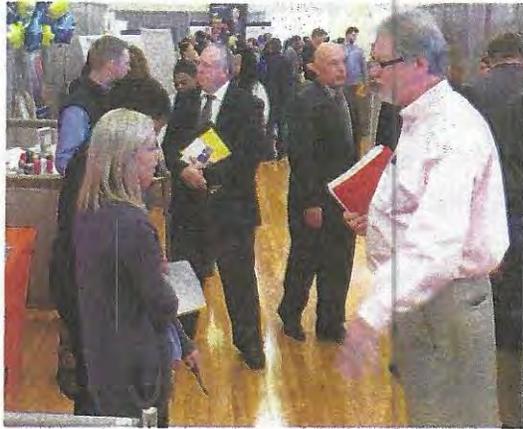


Maps courtesy Evan Crum

## GREEN STREET PARK



## Job Fair & Career Expo on March 18



The Greater Hall Chamber hosts two Job Fair & Career Expos annually — one in the fall and one in the spring. The events are the perfect forum for companies hiring to recruit new employees. Hiring managers meet hundreds of job candidates face-to-face in a convenient location in a short span of time. Consider sponsoring or exhibiting in the upcoming **Job Fair & Career Expo on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 from 10:00 am -**

**2:00 pm at the Gainesville Civic Center.** Job fairs are free and open to the public and are a partnership of the Greater Hall Chamber, the Gainesville Area Employers Committee, Lanier Technical College and the Georgia Department of Labor. For sponsor and exhibit info: Amanda Lewis, 770-532-6206 x111 or email: [alewis@ghcc.com](mailto:alewis@ghcc.com)

1-2-20

### Outdoor Expo

**What:** A trade show featuring sources for hunting, fishing, camping and hiking needs

**When:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 14

**Where:** Gainesville Civic Center, 830 Green St. NW

**More info:** [lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com)

**How much:** Free admission



Times file photo

1-23-20

# Times honors Best of Hall



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Hundreds pack the Gainesville Civic Center Thursday, Jan. 23, for The Times Best of Hall 2020 winner event.

## Winners attend event at civic center

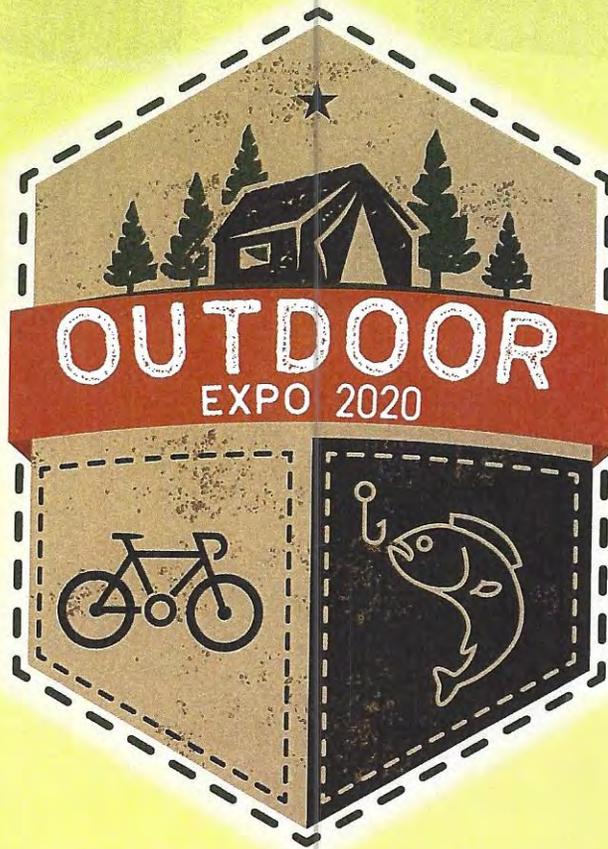
Hundreds of business owners and their guests gathered at the Gainesville Civic Center on Thursday night to celebrate being named the Best of Hall in their respective categories.

Businesses and other organizations are nominated by the community in numerous categories, and winners are chosen based on votes from community members.

Guests to the exclusive winner reception enjoyed a photo booth, catered food and music.



1-24-20



**HUNTING-FISHING  
CAMPING-HIKING-BIKING**

**Saturday, March 14th  
10am - 5pm**

**Gainesville Civic Center**

830 Green St NE,  
Gainesville, GA 30501

**FREE TO  
ATTEND!**

For more information, please  
contact Leah Nelson at  
[lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com)  
770-535-6330

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